

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

**Finding of No Significant Impact and Decision Record
DOI-BLM-UT-C010-2015-0044-EA
August 13, 2015**

**Virtus Lone Pine 34-11-5 #5
Oil & Gas Exploration Well**

Location:

T. 34 S., R. 11 W., sec. 5
SLPM, Iron County, Utah

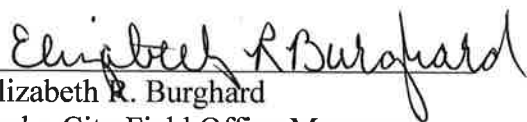
**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Cedar City Field Office
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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-UT-C010-2015-0044-EA
Virtus Lone Pine 34-11-5 #5 Exploration Well

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached environmental assessment, and considering the significance criteria in 40 CFR 1508.27, I have determined that the Virtus Lone Pine 34-11-5 #5 Exploration Well will not have a significant effect on the human environment. An environmental impact statement is therefore not required.


Elizabeth R. Burghard
Cedar City Field Office Manager

8/17/15
Date

DECISION RECORD
Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-UT-C010-2015-0044-EA
Virtus Lone Pine 34-11-5 #5 Exploration Well

Authorities

BLM's oil and gas leasing program is under the authority of the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) mandates that the BLM manage public lands on the basis of multiple use [43 U.S.C. § 1701(a)(7)], and that lease rights must be permitted in a manner that assures adequate protection of other resource values. Minerals are identified as one of the principal uses of public lands in Section 103 of FLPMA [43 U.S.C. § 1702(c)].

Compliance and Monitoring

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will monitor the exploration well to ensure compliance with the terms, conditions, and stipulations of the Application for Permit to Drill (APD). The monitoring will include inspecting construction, operation, and rehabilitation activities until the applicant completes rehabilitation of the site.

Under the Proposed Action, the operator would be required to notify the BLM prior to construction work on Federal lands. Notification to the BLM would also be required when the proposed well was spudded. Qualified BLM personnel would inspect the drilling operations and facilities and would witness cementing and testing of blow-out preventer equipment as necessary. The operator would be required to notify the BLM prior to plugging and abandonment of the well. The operator would be required to notify the BLM prior to reclamation work on public lands. Reclamation work would be monitored and inspected, at least annually, by BLM staff until the site disturbances were satisfactorily rehabilitated.

Terms / Conditions / Stipulations

The proposed action contains features to reduce impacts. The APD is also subject to Lease Stipulations contained in Appendix C of the attached EA and the Conditions of Approval attached to the APD.

Plan Conformance and Consistency

The requested ROW is subject to the Cedar Beaver Garfield Antimony Resource Management Plan (RMP), as amended. The project is in conformance with Minerals Objective A.1 which states, "Provide maximum leasing opportunity for oil, gas, and geothermal exploration and development by utilizing the least restrictive leasing categories necessary to adequately protect sensitive resources." The Standards and Objectives for the RMP assessment also require that, for oil, gas, and geothermal management actions, "Maximum opportunity exists for exploration and development" (RMP, page 37).

Alternatives Considered

The No Action Alternative was considered as a baseline to compare impacts. No other alternatives were considered on public lands, as any impacts from another location would likely be greater than those expected from the proposed action. A 15-day public comment period was offered; no public comments were received.

Public Involvement

Public involvement was solicited for the attached EA by posting the action on the Utah Internet Homepage, Environmental Notification Bulletin Board on March 30, 2015. As a result of the posting, the BLM was contacted by the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA) on April 2, 2015. SUWA requested a 15 day public comment period. The comment period commenced July 29, 2015 and ended on August 13, 2015. No comments were received.

Decision

It is my decision to approve the APD for the Virtus Lone Pine 34-11-5 #5 Exploration Well as described in the proposed action of the attached EA contingent on the operator complying with the Conditions of Approval and all monitoring requirements listed below.

Rationale for Decision

Approval of the APD will meet of the purpose and need of the EA and will not cause unnecessary and undue degradation of public land.

This decision is based on the need for energy resource exploration in this country when balanced with the resource impacts anticipated from the proposed action.

The proposed action is within the jurisdiction of the Cedar City Field Office. The governing document for the project area is the Cedar Beaver Garfield Antimony RMP, approved October 1, 1986. Much of the plan area is categorized as open to oil and gas leasing. Fluid mineral exploration and development is supported in the RMP. Minerals Objective A.1 states, "Provide maximum leasing opportunity for oil, gas, and geothermal exploration and development by utilizing the least restrictive leasing categories necessary to adequately protect sensitive resources." The Standards and Objectives for (RMP) assessment also require that, for oil, gas, and geothermal management actions, "Maximum opportunity exists for exploration and development" (RMP page 37).

The proposed action is consistent with *Mineral Leasing Act (1920)* (30 U.S.C. 181-263, as amended), the *Mining and Minerals Policy Act (1970)* (30 U.S.C. 21), the *Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of 1987* (43 CFR 3162), the *Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA) of 2000* (43 U.S.C. 6361), the *Energy Policy Act of 2005* (43 U.S.C. 6361), the *Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines* (43 CFR 4100, subsection 4180), the *Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976* (43 U.S.C. 1701 t seq., as amended), the

Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 (as amended), the *Eagle Protection Act, 1940* as amended, BLM special status species policy (6840 Manual, 9/16/88), and Executive Order 13186 (Migratory Bird Treaty Act). The proposed action would be consistent with the Iron County Master Plan and is not a concern to the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah.

The proposed action meets the agency objectives identified in the purpose for the proposed action by allowing the lease owner to explore for leasable minerals as required by law on a valid lease.

Other alternatives were considered, but were not analyzed in detail for the reasons specified in Chapter II of the EA. The No Action alternative was not chosen because it was determined that the environmental impacts anticipated from the proposed action would not be significant, nor at a level which would preclude the action as proposed.

Protest/Appeal


This decision shall take effect immediately upon the date it is signed by the Authorized Officer and shall remain in effect while any appeal is pending unless the Interior Board of Land Appeals issues a stay (43 CFR 3150.2(b)). Any appeal of this decision must follow the procedures set forth in 43 CFR Part 4. Within 30 days of the decision, a notice of appeal must be filed in the office of the Authorized Officer at the Cedar City Field Office, 176 East D.L. Sargent Drive Cedar City, UT 84721. If a statement of reasons for the appeal is not included with the notice, it must be filed with the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of Hearings and Appeals, U.S. Department of the Interior, 801 North Quincy St., Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22203 within 30 days after the notice of appeal is filed with the Authorized Officer.

If you wish to file a petition for stay pursuant to 43 CFR Part 3150.2(b), the petition for stay should accompany your notice of appeal and shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

1. The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied;
2. The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits;
3. The likelihood of irreparable harm to the appellant or resources if the stay is not granted; and
4. Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

If a petition for stay is submitted with the notice of appeal, a copy of the notice of appeal and petition for stay must be served on each party named in the decision from which the appeal is taken, and with the IBLA at the same time it is filed with the Authorized Officer.

A copy of the notice of appeal, any statement of reasons and all pertinent documents must be served on each adversely effected party named in the decision from which the appeal is taken and on the Office of the Regional Solicitor, U.S. Department of the Interior, 6201 Federal Building, 125 South State Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84138-1180, not later than 15 days after filing the document with the Authorized Officer and/or IBLA.


Elizabeth R. Burghard
Cedar City Field Office Manager

8/17/15
Date

Attachments: Virtus Lone Pine 34-11-5 #5 Conditions of Approval
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